

Trenton Animal Welfare Advisory Board (TAWAB) Meeting Minutes

July Meeting

Date: July 28, 2025

Time: Meeting called to order at 5:44 PM

Location: Health and Human Services Boardroom

1. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 5:44 PM.
- Introductions were made.
- Motion to approve previous meeting minutes was made by Lenore Robison and seconded. Motion carried.

2. Old Business

a. Chicken Ordinance Discussion

- Marge Cadwell-Wilson asked which department is responsible for chicken ordinances.
- Lenore Robison stated that the Board handles chicken-related matters once received from departments.
- Diego Minacapelli, MD clarified that TAWAB cannot amend or expand the ordinance but may provide recommendations.
- Lenore Robison noted confusion about the Board's role; emphasized past research (NYC chicken ordinances, etc.).
- Janina Calle shared NYC ordinance details.
- Desire Walker presented research on various NJ counties:
- **Motion at 6:05 PM:** No movement to create or amend a chicken ordinance in Trenton at this time.

- Diego Minacapelli, MD requested a follow-up letter stating TAWAB does not recommend proceeding with a chicken ordinance.

b. Spay & Neuter Program Discussion (6:16 PM)

- Reviewed current low-cost options (People for Animals, Trenton Cats, sponsors, rescues).
- Lenore Robison reported contacting 7 organizations; many are limited or no longer active.
- Costs vary: cats inexpensive; dog surgeries are up to \$200, depending on size.
- Diego Minacapelli, MD suggested bringing services to Trenton and exploring mobile units.
- Challenges identified:
 - Identifying mobile spay/neuter services.
 - Recovery accommodations and finances for providing services.
 - Appropriate transportation for bringing animals to spay/neuter services in lieu of mobile services.
- Alternative discussed: visiting a vet surgeon once a week, city-provided location.
- Desire Walker asked if a mobile cat unit model could be adapted for dogs.
- Lenore Robison explained difficulties with dog spay/neuter in mobile settings, including recovery needs. Suggested exploring a vet presence in the city.
- Diego Minacapelli, MD noted mobile human health units as a comparison.
- Joseph Antonello mentioned a hospital near Columbus.
- Marge Cadwell-Wilson asked if a vet is required to be contracted full time.
- Diego Minacapelli, MD said yes, though not necessarily for surgeries—primarily oversight.
- Lenore Robison asked about the investment needed for surgery/recovery spaces.

- Diego Minacapelli, MD said a certified surgical mobile unit would be required.
 - Current practice: surgeries done in PA (\$200 per dog), with officers transporting animals.
 - Lenore Robison mentioned transportation and certification as major hurdles.
 - **Consensus:** Spay/neuter is critical but requires funding, partnerships, and further research.
 - Lenore Robison will follow up with 2 organizations and suggested gathering cost estimates for benefactors.
 - Diego Minacapelli, MD said he will move forward with exploring options, including possibly securing a vet surgeon weekly.
 - Marge Cadwell-Wilson requested an inventory of costs/equipment.
 - Rowan Vet School and House Paws mentioned as possible, though limited, resources.
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3. New Business

a. Ordinance Enforcement

- Joseph Antonello asked if Animal Control Officers (ACOs) can enforce ordinances; consensus was yes.

b. Panhandling with Animals

- Lenore Robison raised concerns about animals present during panhandling.
- Joseph Antonello noted limited cases, but risk exists. Suggested police involvement.
- Janina Calle shared research showing the benefits of pet ownership for homeless individuals.
- Discussion around tightening ordinance language:
 - Actively panhandling while approaching cars should be prohibited when with an animal.

- Suggestion for initial warnings.
- **Motion at 7:07 PM:** Passed to amend the ordinance to prohibit active panhandling with animals.

c. Bylaws Creation

- **Motion made at 7:08 PM** to begin drafting bylaws.
- Marge Cadwell-Wilson volunteered to lead, in collaboration with the chair, vice chair, and secretary.
- Work expected to take several meetings; may divide tasks among members.

d. TAS Report (July 28, 2025)

- As of 4:00 PM:
 - 45 dogs (28 in annex), 12 cats.
 - 1 dog intake, 0 cat intake, 0 fosters.
 - 1 adoption, 0 meet & greets.
 - 1 dog posted on Facebook.
 - No issues; walks were normal.

4. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made at 7:21 PM. Meeting adjourned.